

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02336 300934Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----104439 300939Z /14

O 300747Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8768

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2336

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV RH US UK

SUBJ: RHODESIA: DAVID SMITH STICKS TO PROPOSAL FOR

PREPARATORY MEETINGS -- SALISBURY, JUNE 26

1. GRAHAM AND I LUNCHEd ALONE WITH DAVID SMITH ON MONDAY JUNE 26. IT WAS A FRANK AND FRIENDLY CONVERSATION. SMITH MADE NO ATTEMPT TO DISGUISE HIS RECOGNITION OF THE DIFFICULTIES THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WAS FACING. HE DOUBTED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT AN ELECTION UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND PREDICTED THAT THERE WOULD BE A RISING DEMAND FROM THE AFRICAN INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO FORM A COALITION AND POSTPONE THE ELECTIONS. POWER MIGHT THEN BE TURNED OVER TO THE COALITION AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

2. DAVID SMITH WAS AWARE OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH IAN SMITH ON FRIDAY AND OF THE LATTER'S PROPOSAL FOR A SECRET MEETING OF PRINCIPALS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT IAN SMITH WAS SOMEWHAT OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE LEVELS BELOW MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. HE HIMSELF WAS CONVINCED THAT THEY WOULD NOT AGREE TO A MEETING OF PRINCIPALS UNTIL THE ICE HAD BEEN BROKEN BY A LOWER LEVEL GET TOGETHER. ON REFLECTION, HE SAID HE NOW THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR THE PREPARATORY MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE LEVEL OF DEPUTIES TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS--I.E. THE GROUP WITH WHOM GRAHAM AND I HAVE MET ON EACH OF OUR PRIOR VISITS. THE CHIEF FUNCTION OF
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SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE TO REVIEW THE SITUATION AND RECOMMEND A MEETING OF PRINCIPALS.

3. WE EXPLAINED TO SMITH THAT WE DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WHICH WAS DEMANDING AT THE MINIMUM THAT A DATE AND PLACE BE SET FOR A CONFERENCE BEFORE THEY WOULD CONSIDER ATTENDING A PREPARATORY MEETING. EVEN THEN

WE WERE NOT CERTAIN THEY WOULD AGREE TO THE PRELIMINARY MEETING. AFTER A LENGTHY DISCUSSION SMITH ACCEPTED MY SUGGESTION THAT WE COULD AIM AT A MEETING ONE WEEK WITH THE DEPUTIES TO BE FOLLOWED THE FOLLOWING WEEK BY PRINCIPALS IF THE INITIAL MEETING WAS AT ALL PROMISING.

4. DAVID SMITH SAID THAT HE WOULD TALK TO IAN SMITH AGAIN ON THE SUBJECT. SOMETIMES THE LATTER HAD A VERY FIRM FEELING ABOUT THE SITUATION AND MAY BE RIGHT. DAVID PROMISED THAT HE OR GAYLARD WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH US BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE WEDNESDAY MORNING. WE SAID THAT FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW WE WOULD BE WILLING TO PROPOSE EITHER PROCEDURE TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BUT WE HAD TO HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHICH THEY THOUGHT MOST PROMISING.

5. WE DISCUSSED NUMBERS AT SUCH A CONFERENCE, SAYING WE THOUGHT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD INSIST ON EQUAL NUMBERS WITH THE INTERNAL GROUP. SMITH SUGGESTED THAT WE DO AWAY WITH A TABLE ALTOGETHER AND JUST HAVE PEOPLE SITTING AROUND A ROOM. WE ACCEPTED THIS POSSIBILITY BUT SAID THAT EVEN WITH IT WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEY WOULD NOT OBJECT IF THE PF DID EVENTUALLY FEEL IT MUST BE REPRESENTED BY AN EQUAL NUMBER.

6. DAVID SMITH FEELS THAT NKOMO IS THE KEY TO ANY AGREEMENT. HE SEES THE BEST CHANCE FOR A SETTLEMENT ARISING OUT OF AN AGREEMENT AMONG ALL THE NATIONALISTS FOR SOME KIND OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION. ONCE THE REFERENDUM FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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WHITES WAS OUT OF THE WAY--WHICH SMITH SAID WAS NO PROBLEM--IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR IAN SMITH AND THE PRESENT REGIME TO STEP DOWN HANDING POWER TO THE AGREED GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION. A TRANSITION PERIOD WOULD THEN LAST A YEAR OR TWO BEFORE AN ELECTION TOOK PLACE. SMITH FEELS THAT AN ELECTION EARLIER THAN THAT WOULD RESULT IN CHAOS. (IN THIS HE AGREES WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT KAUNDA LAST SEPTEMBER.) WE SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THIS WAS NOT WHAT WE WERE PROPOSING UNDER THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, IF ALL THE PARTIES AGREED TO IT, WE WOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY.

7. COMMENT: BASED ON THE NEGATIVE REACTION WE HAVE GOTTEN FROM BOTH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE TO OUR PROPOSALS FROM PRINCIPAL LEVEL MEETINGS, DAVID SMITH MAY BE RIGHT IN HIS JUDGMENT THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THEM TO ATTEND A PRINCIPALS MEETING, BUT IAN SMITH SEEMS CONFIDENT. I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF DAVID SMITH'S CHIEF CONCERNS IS THE WEAKNESS OF MUZOREWA WHO HE DOES NOT THINK CAN COME TO A DECISION ON A SUBJECT LIKE THIS WITHOUT CHIKEREMA PUSHING HIM. SMITH SAID THAT (CONTRARY TO OUR SURMISE) HE HAD DISCUSSED THE PROPOSAL PUT TO US ON 14 JUNE AT LENGTH WITH GABELLAH AND CHIKEREMA BEFORE THE MEETING. IT HAD BEEN ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY THAT HE HAD TALKED

CHIKEREMA INTO AGREEING TO THE PREPARATORY TALKS IDEA. LOW

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CAT-B, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, PLANNING MEETINGS, PEACE PLANS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LUSAKA02336
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: n/a
Format: TEL
From: LUSAKA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978064/aaaaactl.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 49a04685-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2280461
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: DAVID SMITH STICKS TO PROPOSAL FOR PREPARATORY MEETINGS--SALISBURY, JUNE 26
TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK, (SMITH, DAVID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/49a04685-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014